



NEWS RELEASE

State of Michigan Employee Blood Challenge
www.michigan.gov/bloodchallenge

TO: State-wide Media

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BLOOD AGENCIES SAY THANKS TO STATE EMPLOYEES

--First quarter of blood challenge yields high results and special prizes--

LANSING, MICHIGAN—One lucky State of Michigan employee will enjoy two nights at a leading Michigan resort as a thank you from blood collection agencies for helping to save lives.

Secretary of State Branch Manager **Cynthia Kerr** in Fenton is the first of four prize-drawing winners in the year-long **State Employee Blood Challenge**. Her prize package includes two nights at the Grand Traverse Resort and Spa, and a twosome of golf on any of the three resort courses.

"Winning the certificate is great. In fact, I'm in shock because I never win anything," said Kerr who had tried donating blood in college and then began giving regularly when her father-in-law needed blood six years ago. **"Donating blood is easy and it saves lives. That's what's really important."**

Kerr beat out nearly 1,690 other State employees who volunteered to give blood from November 1, 2005 through January 31, 2006 through the Challenge. The Challenge is an unprecedented collaboration among the **American Red Cross, Michigan Community Blood Centers, Upper Peninsula Blood Center**, all departments and employees of the **State of Michigan**, and the Michigan Surgeon General **Kimberlydawn Wisdom, M.D.**, who leads the effort.

"I am proud of our hard-working State employees for taking the time to donate blood," said Dr. **Kimberlydawn Wisdom**, Michigan Surgeon General. **"I urge all 55,000 State employees who are able to donate to follow Ms. Kerr's lead and roll up their sleeves to save lives."**

Blood agencies were equally proud of the response of State employees participating in the Challenge.

"We appreciate the enthusiastic way State employees have responded to this special campaign," says **Linda Barar**, vice president of corporate relations at Michigan Community Blood Centers. **"So far, we have seen a substantial rise in donations by State employees at both mobile blood drives and permanent donation centers."**

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For the first quarter, State employees donated 795 pints at worksites and 896 donations at community drives, for a total of 1,691 donations. By the end of the fourth quarter, the Challenge aims to collect 4,588 donations at state worksites, and an unlimited number at community drives.

“While the overall goal of the Challenge is to increase blood donations from State employees at worksites by 20 percent, we wanted to make it a little fun too,” says Sharon Jaksa, CEO of the Great Lakes Region of the American Red Cross. **“Our quarterly drawings for fantastic prizes add to that good feeling they already have from helping to save lives.”**

The State Employee Blood Challenge will run through October 2006. Every quarter, all State employees who present to donate during that quarter will be entered into a drawing for a getaway package. Employees who present to donate three or more times during the Challenge will be eligible for a grand prize drawing for a Mackinac Island getaway. All State employees who present to give blood two times during the Challenge will receive a special insignia baseball cap. Employees may donate blood through blood drives hosted at State worksites, or at blood drives in their communities.

“We’re happy to be participating in the State Employee Blood Challenge,” says Sallie Coron, mobile drive coordinator for the U.P. Regional Blood Center. **“With the State of Michigan encouraging its employees to donate blood, we will see more people make giving blood a lifelong commitment.”**

For more information on the Challenge, visit www.michigan.gov/bloodchallenge, or call the American Red Cross at 1-800-GIVE LIFE, Michigan Community Blood Centers at 1-866-MIBlood, or the Upper Peninsula Regional Blood Center at 1-800-491-4483.

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